

**Testimony Regarding Support for HB 5283 & SB 229 and  
School Construction Funds for Public Charter Schools  
March 4, 2022**

Co-Chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez and other distinguished members of the Education Committee,

Hello, my name is Emanuel Velez, I am a Sophomore at The Bridge Academy Public Charter School in Bridgeport CT.

I just want to start by saying on a personal level that many of my family members have attended this school so I know that they would love to see how much this school could grow. Now I would just like to mention that our school is very small. With that being said, we also have a short staff. Yes we have amazing teachers who try their hardest but we also have teachers who have a lot on their plate.

Our school isn't necessarily in the best area of Bridgeport, we are right next to a train track and I'm sure you know how loud those can be. We are next to Washington Park where there are a lot of intoxicated people who can cause harm to our school. The reason I say harm is because our building has doors that can be opened just by pulling on it with enough force; almost every single door in and outside of the building is this way. And on top of that, we don't have enough money to hire security to protect our students and staff.

One more thing that I want to say before closing my statement is that this money can be used to upgrade and repair the building. We have 2 floors that include a high school and a middle school, top floor being the middle school along with the gym, and bottom floor being the high school. Classrooms that are in the highschool that are placed under the gym, can hear students running, jumping and playing in the gym which is an issue that disrupts the learning environment for the student body.

As I've mentioned before, we have doors in and outside of the school that can be forced open. Inside of the building, we have ceilings that look like they are falling apart.

To wrap up my statement(s), I want to say that this money will greatly help our charter schools grow and help our students and teachers to create a better learning environment for each other, because not only students learn. Thank you for your time.

**Please support HB 5283 & SB 229 and School Construction Funds for Public Charter Schools**

Best regards,  
Emanuel Velez-Student  
The Bridge Academy Public Charter School

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